

Hazel the bear headed for (where else?) Bear Paw, N.C.

By Bill Blair
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LAKE WALES — Hazel the bear and her son Bob are headed for a new home at Bear Paw, an exclusive development in the North Carolina mountains, Masterpiece Gardens owner Ken Curtis said Thursday.

Curtis said he sold the bears for an undisclosed sum to Mary Jo Keith of Polk City after Circus World officials decided they weren't interested.

"We didn't want full-grown bears," Cir-

cus World spokesman Roxanne Gaudin said. "We were just interested in cubs."

Mrs. Keith, who plans to move her horse ranch to the development, said she plans to pick up the bears Saturday afternoon.

"They'll just have a beautiful big pen, trees and a swimming pool," Mrs. Keith said. "They'll just be there for pets."

Mrs. Keith said Bear Paw was developed by an Atlanta doctor, and the late Alfred Hitchcock once owned a home there. She said the development is not open to the public.

"I'm so happy," Curtis said. "They have a terrific home. The place was named for a bear and they don't even have one."

Hazel and Bob originally had been sold to two individuals during Monday's auction of the attraction, but the sale fell through when it was learned the men didn't have proper licenses.

Also on Thursday, Curtis said it probably will be 30 days before he learns exactly what he made on the auction.

When he does, Curtis said he will decide

how much to donate to two Polk County churches and determine what additional funds to give the Agape Players, who helped out at the attraction last year at no charge. Curtis said he recently gave the group about \$10,000 to partially pay off the debt but indicated the group may receive additional money in the future.

Curtis said he is still negotiating with several groups over the tile replica of Leonardo da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper, which was not sold Monday.

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